

bols corresponds to a single reel stop from said first subset of reel stops, and wherein one or more of said visible reel symbols within said first subset of reel stops are expanded into one or more reel stops adjacent thereto, thereby sizing or resizing said expanded reel symbols beyond the boundaries of their respective reel stops.

21. The wager-based gaming machine of claim **20**, wherein said gaming machine comprises a mechanical or electromechanical gaming machine.

22. The wager-based gaming machine of claim **20**, wherein said at least one of said plurality of gaming reels further includes:

a plurality of ghosts comprising blank regions corresponding to a second subset of reel stops selected from said full set of reel stops, wherein each of said plurality of ghosts corresponds to a single reel stop from said second subset of reel stops, and wherein one or more of said visible reel symbols within said first subset of reel stops are expanded into one or more blank regions within one or more of said plurality of ghosts situated adjacent thereto, thereby reducing the amount of blank area within said second subset of reel stops

23. A wager-based gaming system, comprising:

a plurality of processor-based gaming machines adapted for accepting a wager, playing a game based on the wager and granting a payout based on the result of the game, each of said plurality of processor-based gaming machines including:

an exterior housing arranged to contain a plurality of internal gaming machine components therein,
a master gaming controller in communication with at least one of said plurality of internal gaming machine components and adapted to execute or control one or more aspects of said wager based game, and

a display device in communication with said master gaming controller and adapted to present a plurality of simulated rotating reels, said plurality of simulated rotating reels including a set of reel stops, where said set of reel stops includes a first subset of reel stops comprising visible reel symbols and a second subset of reel stops comprising blanks;

a remote host in communication with each of said plurality of processor-based gaming machines, said remote host being adapted to download reel symbols, virtual reel strips, or both to said plurality of processor-based gaming machines; and

at least one simulated reel configurator in communication with at least one of said remote host and said plurality of processor-based gaming machines, wherein said simulated reel configurator is adapted to facilitate the display of simulated rotating reels upon at least one of said display devices, and wherein said simulated reel configurator is adapted to configure at least one of said plurality of simulated rotating reels such that one or more visible reel symbols within said first subset of reel stops are expanded into one or more blank regions within one or more of said second subset of reel stops adjacent thereto, thereby reducing the amount of blank area within said second subset of reel stops.

24. The wager-based gaming system of claim **23**, wherein said at least one simulated reel configurator is located at said remote host.

25. The wager-based gaming system of claim **23**, wherein said at least one simulated reel configurator is located within at least one of said plurality of processor-based gaming machines.

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